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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 002964

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DEPARTMENT FOR NEA AND PRM

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SUBJECT: IRAQIS IN JORDAN - JULY 10

REF: A. AMMAN 2870

[1](#)B. AMMAN 2784 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: Charge de Affaires Daniel Rubinstein for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

Summary

[1](#)1. (C) SUMMARY: The GOJ is still planning for an Iraq Neighbors conference on refugee issues July 22, although concerns about Syrian and Iranian participation seem to be slowing the decision-making. Meanwhile, the GOJ is working to clarify its policy on enrollment of Iraqi children in schools, and specifically the question of whether legal residency will be a requirement; Embassy has engaged senior officials on this item several times in recent days. The line ministries are awaiting a decision from the highest levels, but senior officials continue to reassure Embassy that the government is committed to providing broad access to education for Iraqis. FAFO reportedly delivered the results of its survey of Iraqis in Jordan to the GOJ on July 6. END SUMMARY.

Iraq Neighbors Conference

[1](#)2. (C) While MFA and Ministry of Education officials suggest to Embassy and third-country contacts that the Iraq neighbors conference will take place on July 21 or 22, the decision has not yet been finalized. GOJ officials reiterate, per FM Al-Khatib's statement to the Ambassador (ref B), that a key element of the conference is a focus on the importance of Iraq's taking responsibility for its diaspora, and for addressing internally its flows of displaced persons. However, concerns about Syrian foot-dragging on other regional cooperation matters (e.g. border security and energy), plus fears that Iran will hijack the conference for discussion of its 45,000 "Iranianized" refugees (as characterized by the MFA's Iraq Deskoff), have prevented the GOJ from reaching closure on the timing and structure of the meeting. Recent conversations with MFA contacts suggest that some multilateral or international organizations will be invited, but not necessarily UNHCR. The UK's DfID representative suggested in a July 9 meeting that UNAMI might make the cut even if some donors do not.

Access to Education

[1](#)3. (C) Inconsistent messages from the GOJ on Iraqis' access to education reflect ongoing internal discussions to resolve the issue at the senior political level. In the absence of other instructions, the line ministries are holding to the position that access to schooling will be limited to those eligible for legal residency, but acknowledge that a

political decision is necessary. Senior officials including the King's Office Director Bassem Awadallah continue to assure Embassy that the government is committed to providing broad access to education for Iraqis. Internal discussions continue at the highest level; Awadallah told Charge on July 9 that a highly-restricted group of the King's closest advisors would resolve the matter shortly, and, as he told the Ambassador a few days beforehand, that the issue would be fixed.

¶4. (SBU) Meanwhile, at a July 4 UNICEF-hosted Education Coordination meeting, NGOs planning education programs (including formal, non-formal, and home schooling) for Iraqi children said they feared that their programs would be shut down if the GOJ limits education to only legal residents. Save the Children told TDY RefCoord that it may put a portion of its PRM-funded program on hold pending the GOJ policy decision. UNICEF urged that operational planning continue in order to present a concrete plan at the proposed neighbors conference.

UNHCR Activities and Appeal

¶5. (SBU) UNHCR continues to press the GOJ on the access issue. Jordan Representative Imran Riza has raised the access issue with GOJ officials from the Ministries of Education, Planning, and Health, which are prepared for concrete discussions to expand access to services, but know that political and security considerations drive the policy decision. Riza also told TDY RefCoord on July 4 that he intends to discuss soon with the Ministry of Interior and General Intelligence Department "creative" options to some of the residency issues, such as the use of UNHCR registration documents for asylum seekers. Riza said that UNHCR to date

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has registered nearly 37,000 Iraqis as asylum seekers in Jordan; he hopes to register 60,000 by the end of 2007. NOTE: UNHCR registration of asylum seekers in Jordan is distinct from its registration of refugees, the latter being those who are specifically referred for resettlement. END NOTE.

¶6. (C) Riza said that the Jordan portion of the pending UNHCR revised Iraq appeal has not changed; expected to be released at the end of the week, the revised appeal will include \$24 million for Iraqis in Jordan, including \$10 million for education and \$4 million for health programs. On July 9, however, the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) and DfID representatives in Amman told TDY RefCoord and Poloff that they were skeptical of the revised appeal. ECHO, in particular, expressed doubt about UNHCR's capacity to implement significantly larger programs in Jordan and Syria, and said it would press the agency's representatives to brief the international community on progress since its last appeal, its current needs, and implementation plans. DfID noted that any further funding it provides this year will go to the International Committee of the Red Cross's Iraq budget extension.

FAFO Survey: In GOJ hands

¶7. (SBU) Lead Researcher Kristin Dalen told Emboffs on July 3 that FAFO completed its survey sample of Iraqis in Jordan and would present a preliminary report to the GOJ before July 16. Dalen would not share specific results with the USG, but reaffirmed earlier suggestions that the results would show significantly fewer Iraqis in Jordan than previous estimates (Note: which ranged around 700,000; refuels. End note.) FAFO will leave further distribution of the report to the GOJ.

¶8. (SBU) Dalen said that the survey results would show a complex picture and a decidedly heterogeneous Iraqi community, with numbers skewed toward the relatively wealthy

and educated.

Border

19. (SBU) In two visits (July 4 and July 9) to both sides of the Jordanian-Iraqi border by Embassy Amman's Civil Affairs Liaison Team (CALT), U.S. military contacts and GOJ officials reported very low numbers of Iraqis entering Jordan via the land border. They told CALT that Iraqi border officials screened many Iraqi nationals before their arrival at the Jordanian point of entry. Iraqis who had incomplete or fraudulent documents were generally turned back.

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